STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Prepared by: Legal Services Unit	**Date:** 18.04.2011

Name of Witness: Glenn Andrew Walker

Address of Witness: Emergency Services Complex, Kedron

Occupation: Senior Executive Officer

Position: Executive Director, Information and Communication Systems (ICSystems)

Telephone: (Work) [redacted] **(Mobile)** [redacted]

I, **GLENN ANDREW WALKER**, Executive Director of ICSystems, Corporate Support Division, Department of Community Safety, Queensland, state:

1. I have over 10 years experience in the field of Information and Communication Technology ('ICT') including several years performing technical roles associated with the design, implementation and maintenance of ICT systems. I hold an Advanced Diploma of Engineering Information Communication Technology and a Diploma of Information Technology.

2. I have a strong founding in ICT Technologies, especially those that pertain to the Emergency Services environment. Subsequent to my technical focus I have also led the deliveries of several large Emergency Services focused ICT Programs and Projects, and over the last two years, have performed the role of Director, ICT Operations for the Department of Community Safety.

3. My current duties and responsibilities in the position of Executive Director ICSystems include providing technology vision and leadership in the development

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and implementation of enterprise information management and information and communication technology strategies, policies, plans, which support the Department in achieving its business goals and align with whole-of-Government direction and initiatives. I provide key strategic level advice to senior management on information management and communication technology in the Department.

4. The communications technologies supported by ICSystems in relation to Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) include the two way radio network, telephone network, station turnout, computer aided dispatch equipment and associated systems, premises fire alarm monitoring, deployable communications trailers and equipment, specialist communications vehicles, paging systems, multichannel voice recording systems, triple zero telephone services and the calling line identification system, and other support systems used in the emergency call taking and dispatch environment.

5. I have been asked to provide this statement to assist the Commissioner of the Flood Inquiry in her investigation into the events that took place on the tenth of January 2011 at James and Kitchener Street in Toowoomba.

6. The purpose of this statement is to provide an overview of the QFRS Triple-Zero communications systems including the processes surrounding receipt of calls and management of Fire and Rescue resources.

The QFRS Communications Centre's

7. The QFRS Communications Centre's form the link between the community requesting Fire and Rescue services and the provision of those services. Requests for urgent QFRS services will generally be received by telephone, using the triple zero emergency reporting system.

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8. The Communications Centres prioritise the urgency of requests, determine the appropriate response to meet caller's needs, and provides callers with other instructions where necessary. The centres deploy, coordinate and monitor the movement of all emergency response vehicles.

9. For organisational purposes, the State is divided into seven regions. Each region has a dedicated QFRS Communications Centre. The centres include:

- Cairns;
- Townsville;
- Rockhampton;
- Maroochydore;
- Brisbane;
- Southport; and
- Toowoomba.

10. The relevant Communications Centre in relation to QFRS attendance at Kitchener and James St on the tenth of January 2011 was the Toowoomba Communications Centre, located in the South West Region.

11. The Toowoomba triple zero Communications Centre generally operates with two people per shift, and under normal conditions, operators conduct both call taking and dispatch activities.

12. During times of peak demand during major incidents, QFRS implement load management procedures which involves splitting the call taking and dispatch functions between different operators. This load management mechanism allows the call taker to focus on managing a higher than normal call volume, and the dispatcher to manage the deployment of resources in the field.

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Triple Zero Calls

13. Calls to the triple zero number are initially answered by a Telstra Triple Zero '000' operator. The role of the Telstra operator is to determine which emergency service organisation is required and to transfer the call to the correct emergency service location.

14. Upon routing of a triple zero call to the appropriate Communications Centre, the call is presented to the first available operator. If in the event that the Communications Centre is unable to answer the call, it is then routed to a pre determined alternative, which in the case of the Toowoomba Communications Centre is Brisbane.

15. More specifically the call presentation logic for the Toowoomba Communications centre involves:

    1. First presentation at the Toowoomba Communications Centre;
    2. If the call goes unanswered for 27 seconds it is then represented at the Toowoomba Communications Centre again;
    3. If after two presentations of 27 seconds each the call remains unanswered, it is then transferred to the Brisbane Communications Centre;
    4. If the call remains unanswered after three presentations it is then transferred to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) Communications Centre in the relevant capital city;
    5. Telstra then hand over the call and QPS take the incident details and ownership to transfer the call to QFRS;
    6. In all circumstances the Telstra Triple zero operator stays on the line with the caller until handover to a Communications Centre Operator has occurred.

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16. If in the event that another Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) or QFRS Communications Centre receives a call on behalf of another region, the call is logged into the Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch System (ESCAD) which automatically presents the job to the region in which the incident has occurred.

17. All operational phones and voice radios in QFRS Communications Centre's are connected to digital voice logging machines. Conversations made on the voice radio and telephone systems are recorded on this equipment and the tapes are kept for two years or longer if required.

18. The voice logging equipment records and time stamps triple zero calls and radio communications. The system is time synchronized from the Department's Corporate time source which is comprised of three sources with an automated process to ensure time synchronization is maintained.

19. The time and date stamp for voice recording are noted on the audio wave file which are produced as a result of a call. Each audio wave file is stamped in the format below:

000 # 1 (1) 14-10-2010 07-26-13.wav

- *000* – Identifies the recording as being audio related to triple zero
- #1 – Identifies the Line Number on the local PABX System
- *14-10-2010* – Identifies the date the recording was taken
- *07-26-13* – Identifies the time a recording commenced

Any subsequent changes to filenames associated with voice recordings can only be made once they have been downloaded by an authorised person.

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Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch System (ESCAD)

20. The ESCAD system serves as the core infrastructure of the QFRS decision support process – seamlessly integrating an interactive map display with call handling, dispatching, record keeping and information management. I have listed below, the various features of the current QFRS ESCAD system:

- address verification;
- displays available resources and recommends closest and most appropriate vehicle to be dispatched;
- real time monitoring of the incident; and
- mapping interface which displays multiple layers of mapping information which can display vehicles and incidents on the map and the movement of those vehicles.

21. The Department of Community Safety ESCAD environment is a joint system used by both QAS and QFRS.

22. The ESCAD system enables a real time recording of the various transactions involved in the call taking and dispatching of ambulances. The system generates an audit trail of the time a transaction takes place and details about the nature of the transaction. QFRS records the following times for each incident:

- receipt of call;
- dispatched;
- en route;
- on scene;
- departed scene;
- at destination;
- partially available;
- clear time; and
- appointment time (for non urgent cases only).

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23. The data collected through ESCAD is documented on an Incident Detail Report which is produced as a result of every incident created.

24. Upon receiving a request for Fire and Rescue services, QFRS call takers utilise the ESCAD system to log the details of the incident, including the location and type of incident underway.

25. Once the type of incident has been confirmed and the location has been 'geoverified', the incident is given a priority and emergency response resources are allocated to the job.

26. Emergency Response resources are automatically 'recommended' by the ESCAD system based on the status of the resource (i.e. available) and the type of incident. This feature ensures that the correct resource with the correct equipment is dispatched to respond to a request for assistance.

27. The ESCAD system uses a number of different mechanisms to alert Fire and Rescue crews to the need to respond to an incident. The Station Turnout System is located in most Fire Stations around the state and upon being activated, sounds a number of alarms in the station to alert crews. In addition to the Station Turnout System, Paging systems are also sometimes used to provide crews with the details of an incident. Both the Queensland Fire and Rescue Stations in Toowoomba have Station turnout capabilities.

28. In all circumstances QFRS utilise voice communications via the Radio Network to confirm the receipt of an incident and the status of resources proceeding to assist.

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29. Whilst an incident is underway QFRS Communications Center operators transcribe Radio Communications messages into the ESCAD system to keep an accurate log of activities undertaken in the field. This process is referred to as 'Word-back', and captures important information from the scene and is also used to track the status of Fire and Rescue resources.

30. The joint nature of QAS and QFRS ESCAD system facilitates the use of 'associated incidents'. The associated incident function allows both QAS and QFRS to share a single incident within the ESCAD system therefore cutting down on the need to manually relay incident details between the two services.

31. This same capability does not exist between QPS ESCAD and QFRS and QAS ESCAD. In the circumstance that incident details need to be shared between QPS and QFRS, dedicated telephone lines are used to verbally relay the details of an incident. DCS and QPS are currently working towards developing interoperability between ESCAD systems across Public Safety.

32. The ESCAD system receives its time source from a Wharton GPS Time Source. A Wharton GPS synchronized master clock is a precision timing device designed to maintain accurate time for a multitude of systems and equipment. All Computers in the ESCAD domain synchronise their time using the Windows Time service.

33. A recent audit of the time synchronization within the ESCAD environment has found all services across the State to be properly synchronized. A similar audit of the agencies Corporate Information and Communications Technology Environment has also verified that correct time synchronization is in place.

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Radio Communications Network

34. QRFS utilise a stand alone Radio Communications Network which forms the basis for all communications between the Communication Centre and emergency response personnel in the field.

35. The radio Communication Network is accessed via handheld and in vehicle systems that permits service specific resources to communicate during an incident.

36. This stand alone nature of the existing radio Communictions network does not accommodate interoperable communications to take place between QPS, QFRS and QAS. In the situation whereby one service requires to speak to another, the message is relayed from one Communications Centre to another, who in turn pass the message to resources in the field.

37. The QFRS and QAS Radio Communications network is based on analogue technologies which are susceptible to interference during major weather events, including heavy rain.

38. In the event that Radio Communications issues are encountered, most QFRS Emergency Response Vehicles implement the use of mobile phones as a continuity measure.

39. During the incident that took place in Toowoomba on the 10th of January, the radio Communictions network performed well and remained available throughout the event. The only difficulty experienced in relation to this particular event was the volume of radio traffic on the network, and the ability of people to get 'airtime'.

40. QFRS and QAS have an on-going annual Program of work to enhance the radio network in response to increasing population growth and known black spots.

41. Over the last three years QFRS and QAS have upgraded over fifteen (15) radio repeater sites, and added an additional Four (4) new sites in the South West region in response to identified communications black spots, and demographic growth within the Community.

42. I make this statement of my own free will believing its contents to be true and correct.

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Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of Section 110A (5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

(1) This written statement by me dated 18/10/2010 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 8 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and

(2) I make it knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating anything that I know is false.

.... [redacted] ..... Signature

Signed at Brisbane this 18th day of April 2011.

This is page 10 of a statement comprising 10 page/s.

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